Not In Blood, But In Bond

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Summary

It's 1996 and John leaves Sam and Dean to fend for themselves for too long. Dean starts turning tricks to put food on the table, but when one night takes a turn for the violent, Dean takes Sam and escapes to Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Bobby Singer is suddenly faced with the effects of John Winchester's negligent parenting, spelled out in stark black and purple on his eldest son's skin.

Basically a blatant excuse for Dean!whump and Fatherly Bonding Time with Bobby.

Notes

ALL THE LOVE to my tireless beta, Jessa.

June 29, 1996

Bobby's usual nightly routine of research and whiskey was disturbed by the sound of a car screeching to a violent halt in the driveway, followed immediately by the slamming of doors and hurried footsteps. Vigilant as ever, Bobby shouldered his shotgun, approaching the door as three heavy knocks sounded through the house.

"State your business!" Bobby yelled.

"Bobby," a sharp, young voice called back, "it's Dean."

Bobby stepped forward, unfastening the locks and throwing open the door. Sure enough, John's boys were standing on his doorstep, Sam slumped tiredly against his older brother, eyes hooded with exhaustion. Dean's arms were supporting Sam in a protective grip, eyes hunted and blood trickling from a cut across his cheek and a split lip.

"What the hell are you two doin' here at this hour?" Bobby asked, ushering them in and bolting the door behind them. "And where's your Daddy?"

"Don't know," Dean snapped, maneuvering Sam towards the kitchen, "Don't give a shit."

"The hell are you talking about, Dean?" Bobby frowned, following the boys into the kitchen and opening the fridge. He pulled out the three slices of pizza he'd been saving for tomorrow's lunch and set them in front of Sam, frown deepening as he watched the boy dig in ravenously. "What the hell happened to you two? Why're you here? And why're you limpin'?"

Dean's face flushed and he glanced away. "It's nothing. We just...ran into some trouble. Dad's out on a hunt. I couldn't get ahold of him, so we just booked it here. He'll figure out where we are eventually. Or, you know, if he checks his fucking phone."

"Okay," Bobby said, eyeing Dean calculatingly. "You know you can always come to me when you need help, son. That's why I'm here."

Dean looked back at Bobby, face strangely vulnerable. "I...thanks, Bobby."

Bobby grunted, embarrassed. “Don’t mention it, boy. Now come on, let’s get your brother here to bed before he passes out on my kitchen table.”

Sam looked up blearily from where he’d just finished the last piece of pizza, body slack and unresisting as Dean tugged him to his feet. Bobby trailed the boys to the spare bedroom, watching from the doorway as Dean sat his brother down on the bed and pulled off his shoes before tucking him in.

“G’night, Dean,” Sam murmured, snuggling down into the blankets with an exhausted sigh.

Dean ran a hand affectionately through Sam’s shaggy hair. “‘Night, Sammy.”

By the time Dean had crossed the room to turn the lights off, Sam was already asleep.

“C’mon,” Bobby said, “Kitchen.” Dean followed him sheepishly.

Bobby went straight to his pantry, pulling out a roll of stale crackers and tossing them onto the table. Dean stood in the doorway, watching silently as Bobby grabbed a can of soup and poured it into a pot.

“So,” Bobby turned to face Dean, crossing his arms over his chest, “You wanna tell me what’s really goin’ on?”

Dean’s head jerked up. “What do you mean?”

“Don’t play dumb with me, boy. I’ve known you since you were five. You’re a shit liar, and I can tell something’s got you spooked. So spill. You boys try to hunt on your own?”

“No,” Dean snapped, crossing his arms defensively. “Dad’s on a hunt. We were supposed to be on *research duty*.”

“Okay. So what went wrong?”

“Dad was only supposed to be gone a week.”

Bobby frowned. “And how long’s he been gone for?”

Dean looked Bobby dead-on, eyes burning with cold fury. “A month and a half.”

“Jesus,” Bobby swore, dragging a hand over his forehead. “That son of

a bitch. He tell you were he was going?"

"Not a word," Dean muttered. "He shot us an e-mail about once a week saying he was fine. We got the last one six days ago. I've tried asking him for information about the hunt, but he never responded."

"Goddammit, John," Bobby groaned. "So he's been AWOL this whole hunt? Where'd he leave you boys?"

"A motel."

Bobby quirked an eyebrow at Dean. "That must have cost a pretty penny to stay in for a month and a half."

"Yeah," Dean's expression darkened.

"And?" Bobby questioned. "I know your Daddy uses credit card scams, but neither of you look old enough to pass that con off."

Dean shifted uncomfortably. "We got by."

"Did you now?"

"I...I hustled pool."

Bobby huffed out a doubtful laugh. "Oh, come on, boy. Don't lie to me. You and I both know you're absolute shit at pool."

"I am not!" Dean said defensively.

"Yeah, kid. You are. And you gonna explain what's got you bleedin' and gimpin'?"

Dean's gaze flickered away, mouth working futilely, "I just got in a fight, is all. Me and this guy had a disagreement over a...negotiation, and push came to shove."

"What kinda negotiation?" Bobby asked, eyes narrowing. "What have you gotten yourself into?"

"Nothing!" Dean insisted, arms crossed protectively over his chest, "It's nothing. Don't worry about it, Bobby. I'm fine."

"Oh, yeah? That why you're bleedin' on my floor?"

"Just forget it," Dean pleaded, hunching his shoulders and shifting his weight to his left foot, making his shirt ride up.

Bobby's eyes darted down to Dean's waist.

"What's on your hip, boy?"

Dean blanched, arms jerking to pull his shirt down past his waist. "It's nothing!"

"Bullshit," Bobby countered. Dean looked cornered.

"Bobby, seriously, it's—"

"Stop *lying* to me, boy," Bobby growled. "There is something wrong here, and I ain't gonna let you hide it from me. Now take off your damn shirt."

Dean shot Bobby one last desperate glance before his shoulders slumped and he wrapped trembling fingers around the hem of his shirt, drawing it up and over his head with a pained hiss before letting it fall to the floor. His arms hung awkwardly at his sides.

Dark purple bruises littered his chest, and there was a short, shallow cut along one of his clavicles. But more noticeably, there were two hand-shaped bruises on his hips, clearly fresh. Bobby's gaze flickered between the bruises and Dean's panicked expression, factoring in the slight limp and bloody lip. His gut clenched, his heart sank, and his blood ran cold. He looked Dean in the eye. "Dean..."

Dean inhaled shakily, arms darting up to cross over his chest again, "I...I...it's not what it looks like?"

"Oh yeah?" Bobby's voice cracked, "'Cause it looks like you've been raped."

Dean sucked in a loud breath, eyes frantic and watery as he looked at Bobby. "I..." his lower lip trembled, "I wasn't..." Dean's voice broke and he cut himself off, mouth snapping closed.

Bobby could feel his throat closing up as a wave of furious, devastated helplessness washed over him. He reached forward, wrapping his arms around Dean's skinny back and pulling him forward, one hand cradling the back of Dean's neck.

"Damn it, Dean…" Bobby breathed. Dean's hands grabbed shakily at the back of Bobby's flannel shirt as he buried his face against Bobby's shoulder.

“It’s okay, son,” Bobby choked out. “I’m here.”

Dean let out a small, pained sound into the cloth on Bobby’s shoulder, gripping at his back desperately. “It was my fault,” he murmured into the shirt.

“*No*.” Bobby pulled back, holding Dean at an arm’s length, “This ain’t your fault.”

“I—I wasn’t—he didn’t…he didn’t get that far. I agreed to the usual and he…he wouldn’t pay me so I got mad and then he said he could take what he wanted and he *tried* but I…I fought him off, got away. But I didn’t have the money and we needed it for rent by tomorrow, so I woke up Sammy, hotwired a piece of shit car and drove us here.” Dean looked at Bobby mournfully, green eyes wide and wet. “I shouldn’t have argued with him. If I’d just let him, I might’ve gotten the money and then I could’ve paid the rent and fed Sammy and we would’ve been where Dad told us to stay and—”

“Stop it, Dean,” Bobby said, voice brooking no argument. “You stop that right now, y’hear? You did good, comin’ here. None of this is your fault. I want you to go get my first aid kit out of the hallway closet, grab a blanket, and go sit on the couch, okay?”

Dean nodded, wiping a hand across his cheeks.

“Good,” Bobby clapped him gently on the shoulder. “Now I’m gonna get that soup into a bowl before it burns and I’ll meet you in there.”

Dean nodded again, turning to walk down the hallway. Bobby turned off the stove and poured the soup into a bowl. He carried it and the roll of crackers into the living room, setting them on the table in front of the fire. Dean shuffled back in moments later, first aid kit in hand.

“I’ll take that,” Bobby reached out for the kit, taking it from Dean’s hands as the boy sank down onto the couch. Bobby sat down next to him, reaching into the kit and pulling out an antiseptic wipe, swiping it across the cuts on Dean’s clavicle, cheek, and lip. He wouldn’t normally tend to Dean like this—God knows the kid could take care of himself—but Dean had been through hell today and if Bobby wanted to act on his latent paternal instincts, that was his own damn business.

“Your lip and the cut on your collarbone should heal okay,” Bobby said. “They’re shallow enough. But I’m gonna put some bandages on this one, alright?” Bobby pressed two butterfly band-aids over the cut across Dean’s cheek. “There. Won’t even scar.” Bobby patted Dean’s

uninjured cheek before moving to pull a blanket around the boy's shoulders. Dean was staring resolutely down at his hands.

"You gonna tell me what needs tending to that's makin' you limp?" Dean had said it hadn't 'gone that far', but Bobby still wasn't sure what that meant.

"My ankle," Dean murmured, "The right one, I think it's twisted."

"Alright," Bobby stood, already on his way to the freezer, "I'll get you some ice." He grabbed a plastic bag from the counter, filled it with ice and wrapped it in a clean dish towel before heading back into the living room and plopping down next to Dean.

"Come on," Bobby patted his lap. "Put it up here, lemme have a look at it."

Dean swung his right leg up obligingly, setting his foot carefully in Bobby's lap.

Bobby pulled off Dean's shoe and sock, setting them aside and rolling up the pant leg. Sure enough, there was already some swelling around Dean's ankle. Bobby placed the ice pack gently on the injured ankle, offering Dean a sympathetic grimace when the boy hissed at the sudden cold.

"You'll be alright," Bobby assured him again, "you just need ice and rest and that ankle'll be good as new."

"Thanks, Bobby," Dean murmured, glancing up with an insincere grin.

"No need to thank me. I'm just doin' my job. Lookin' out for my boys."

"You shouldn't have to. I should be—"

"You're seventeen. You shouldn'tbe needing to worry about paying rent and feeding another mouth."

Dean looked at him skeptically.

Bobby sighed. "Christ, Dean. The way your Daddy raised you—it ain't right. You may be a great hunter, but he's done so much wrong by you, I don't know if I'll *ever* forgive him."

"This isn't my Dad's fault. I should've been able to find the money easier. Hell, I probably could've looked harder for a job—"

“And where would you have told them to send the paycheck?” Bobby asked.

“The motel, I guess.”

“Uh huh. And what would you have done during the week before you got your first paycheck?”

Dean was silent again.

“Dean, listen to me,” Bobby said, “It is your Daddy’s responsibility to take care of you and your brother. It’s *his* job to provide the money for you to live and sleep and eat. Not yours, not your brother’s, *his*. And he failed you.” Bobby rested a hand on Dean’s shin. “Christ, if you were *my* boys, I’d never let you want for *nothin’*. Your father just can’t appreciate something even if it’s sittin’ right in front of him.”

Dean let out a bitter chuckle. “I guess sometimes he can get pretty distracted.”

“That ain’t no excuse for what he did to you two this time around,” Bobby grunted. “You sellin’ yourself, to pay the rent and feed your brother? That breaks my goddamn heart, Dean.”

Dean nodded jerkily, looking down at his hands again.

“I ain’t blamin’ you.”

“Maybe you should,” Dean muttered, just under his breath.

“What’re you on about now, boy?”

“Nothing,” Dean backtracked, scrubbing a hand through his hair. “Dad said—It’s nothing.” Bobby swore, the next time he saw that man, he was gonna… Well, it wasn’t gonna be pretty.

“I don’t give a shit what John said. You shouldn’t be doing that. No more, ya hear?

Dean mumbled something under his breath.

“I’m serious, boy.”

“Yes, sir,” Dean bit out.

“Don’t you ‘yes sir’ me. I ain’t your daddy. Much as I wish I were sometimes.”

“You wouldn’t want me for a son, anyway.” Dean ducked his head.

“Now what in God’s name is that s’posed to mean?”

“I suck cock for pay, Bobby. I’m not exactly the Brady Bunch son, over here.” Dean rubbed the back of his neck awkwardly. “I liked it, you know. Sometimes.”

“And?” Bobby’s eyebrows shot up. “You want a medal or somethin’?”

Dean cracked a smile. “Here’s where you say,” he dropped his voice, and for a second Bobby couldn’t tell if it was him or John the boy was trying to impersonate. “‘No son of mine is going to be a cocksucking faggot.’ And then you go all Westboro on my ass.”

Bobby rolled his eyes. “You been watching too much daytime TV, cooped up in that motel room all day.”

Dean hummed in response, slouching down in his seat and stretching his legs out in front of him, being careful with his bad ankle.

“Listen. You wanna fuck everything that moves, male, female, alien, that’s fine by me, so long as you *wanna.* Not ‘cause you have to. You end up fallin’ for some tall, dark, handsome stranger, good for you. I’ll stick the damn Christmas card up on the fridge.

“Thanks Bobby,” Dean said, smiling.

“Don’t mention it, kid,” Bobby huffed. “Now eat your damn soup before I have to heat it up again.”

“Yessir,” Dean joked, pulling the bowl onto his lap and eating it with the same famished hunger as his brother.

Bobby gave him a fond smile and reached for the crackers.

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